

## IN HONOR OF WILLIAM WRIGHT

William Wright was born Oct. 5, 1831 at Burgh-by-Sands, Cumberland, England. He was a twin to a sister, Hannah. His parents were William Wright and Margaret Ashbridge Wright. His grandparents were William Wright and Margaret Hewetson. His sisters and brother older than he, was Margaret, John and Jane. Born after him were a brother John and a sister, Isabella. All the members of this family died young with the exception of he and his sister, Margaret.

When William was only 4 years old his father died, leaving his mother a widow with two children to support. When he was eight years old his mother married William Atkinson.

William was educated in good schools in England which helped him very much to educate his own family later on.

When William was a lad of fifteen years, he first heard about the gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was on the street one evening in his home town when he saw a group of people listening to some singing. He joined the group and became very interested in what two Mormon Missionaries from America were telling the people. He knew they spoke the truth, and hurried home to tell his mother what he had heard.

The next evening she went with him to hear these men tell of this new religion. She also was much impressed. The truths of the gospel filled her very soul as it had her sons. They invited the Elders to their home many times. They studied the gospel and prayed about it and were baptized. His mother on Feb. 16, 1848 and he on Nov. 9, 1848.

William fell in love with a lovely Latter-day Saint girl, Jemima Bands. They planned that he should come to America and prepare a place for her. He didn't know which of the ten ships carrying Mormon Saints that left Liverpool, England in 1853 that William was a passenger on. These ships landed at New Orleans and from there the Saints came up the Mississippi River, hence to Kanesville (Council Bluffs), Iowa, the outfitting place that year for the Saints to cross the plains to Utah.

William joined the Appleton M. Mormon wagon train of two hundred souls with twenty-two wagons. They had a fairly good journey and arrived in Salt Lake City Oct. 16, 1853.

When he landed in Utah he went to work for Ezra T. Benson and out of the meager earnings saved what he could and sent to England for his sweetheart, Jemima to join him. In 1856 he drove an ox team to Council Bluffs, Iowa to meet she and her mother.

When they returned to Salt Lake City, they were married and moved to Provo. He and Jemima became the parents of nine children who were: William Thomas, Jemima Ann, Margaret, Wilford Bands, James Lehi, Joseph Smith, Hannah Rebecca, Sarah Elizabeth and Myron Smith.

William thought the sun had really gone out of his sky, when his wife died June 4, 1871, leaving him with eight small children to care for.

For quite some years William Wright had been friendly with the George Baum family. He and George had worked together and were instigators in building a road through Provo Canyon. William was the toll gate keeper at the North end. It was while he was stationed here that he located the lovely spot in Charleston that he was later to homestead and where he was to spend the rest of his life. It was to become known as the Wright Ranch down by the road to Wallsburg. He moved there on October 27, 1870.

On Oct. 31, 1871 he married Mary Jane Baum. She was 17 years old and he was 39. She was the daughter of George and Hannah Jane Cloward Baum. Her mother had died when she was a small girl and a kind step-mother had reared her; so she realized perfectly well her responsibility that she had taken upon herself by marrying William Wright and caring for his large family.

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She was a strong healthy girl and wanted to have a large family of her own. Her son, George Baum Wright was born Sept. 12, 1872, followed by fifteen others, namely: Eliza Jane, Mary Isabell, Owen Uriah, Wallace B., John Elmer, Charles, Stella Melissa, Albert (died young), May Pearl, David Nephi (died young), Zera and Zella (twins), Edna (died young), Leera and Lerin Atkinson.

It is said that William Wright crossed the plains six times to assist emigrants in his younger days.

When a mission call came to him in 1883-4, even though he had a large family to support, he accepted the call and filled a mission to England. He was interested in doing temple work, making the long trip to St. George to do this work.

From the very first, education has been prized by Charlesten residents, and the establishment of schools was given much attention by early settlers. When the community was re-settled after the Black Hawk Indian disturbances in 1867, William Chatwin taught school in a log home. William Wright also taught school for several winters in George Brown's home; as well as, the homes of William Bagley and the McAfee's. He taught the school where his children attended, and was a strict disciplinarian.

He was always a full supporter of any civic betterment project in his community.

The first permanent chapel in Charlesten was built in 1873 under the direction of Elder Watkins. William Wright was the first ward clerk and served for many years. He held the office of a High Priest and held many other church positions, also. In addition he was a Justice of the Peace and a school trustee and farmed most of his life.

He was called upon many times when people were sick, as there were no doctors for miles around. He always seemed to know just what to do. He was very good at setting broken bones, and pulling aching teeth. He doctored with herbs a great deal, and knew just which ones to use for his medicines. He insisted that all his children learn to swim in case they were ever in a situation where they needed to save lives.

William was a great lover of animals. He had a prize bull, a stallion and a bulldog, that was his constant companion. At one time the bulldog saved his life. The bull had cornered him and would have gored him to death if the faithful dog hadn't jumped up and bitten the bull on the nose, distracting him long enough so William could get away. This was a serious predicament as William was badly crippled with arthritis and walked with a cane.

This faithful pioneer died in Charlesten Nov. 11, 1903 at the age of 71, was the father of 25 children and a devoted husband. He was buried in the Prove Cemetery. Mary Jane died Oct. 14, 1928 in Prove and is buried there also.

Information taken from the Wasatch County book "New Beautiful Upon The Mountains", from "Pioneers & Prominent Men of Utah", and from personal family histories. Compiled by Nora Lund, D.U.P. Historian for Nora Wright North, granddaughter.

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